

CÉZANNE

Paul Cézanne
& Still Life



the **COMPOSITION**

how to put things together the right way

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soft-pastel fall still life

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issue 11/2014

Paul Cézanne



1839
TO
1906



France
EUROPE



Post-Impressionism

“ I want to astonish Paris with an apple! ”

Paul Cézanne

Paul Cézanne loved painting apples. And in the 19th century, he was the only one. Most painters at that time created amazingly realistic portraits of rich people. They painted epic mythical or Biblical scenes or famous battles. The landscape artists were considered slackers by many critics, because it was ‘way too easy.’ And in that time, Paul decided he would paint only apples (and maybe a pear from time to time).

Why? He **believed that still life** (which was considered the lowliest genre of them all) **could be a great tool for faithfully representing the appearance of light and space.** And since the still life was considered so low, he decided to paint it with the **most common fruit of them all: an apple.** Just to prove his point. Plus, he loved apples.

His task—to **astonish Paris with an apple**—was not easy. It may sound crazy or silly to you but it sounded a hundred times sillier to the critics in the 19th century. But Paul did it. He astonished the art critics in the largest city in France with nothing but his apples. How? They never saw brushstrokes like his. Most painters at that time hid their brushstrokes. They tried to make their works as realistic as possible. Paul did not. His brush strokes were short, parallel and not hiding at all. They were thick and you could see, very clearly, every single one of them. You could watch as the color changed a little bit with every single stroke of his brush. It would get darker, lighter, bolder or more vivid. And it would work amazingly well.

He created over 200 still life paintings. He always set them up with great care. He studied them. He looked at them from many different angles. He played around with the light and the composition (the way they were placed on the table). He stuck fat coins and small wedges underneath the apples to position them the way he wanted. He placed them on a wrinkled tablecloth and moved the vases so that they were not straight.

Paul met Édouard Manet (his fellow painter) on the street and said, 'Sorry, I don't want to shake your hand—I haven't bathed in three days.'

He did not like touching anyone, at any time.



When Paul finally got around to paint his still life, he took his time. **He was a slow painter.** He often started painting the still life but did not finish until the flowers faded and the food had gone bad.

He also painted the still life differently than he put it together. He always confused the eye a little bit – in a good and playful way. In one of his paintings, he covers part of the table with a messy tablecloth and if you trace the table, you see that it is so crooked it could not have laid on the table like that. These little things are what made his paintings interesting and fun to look at.

[Click here to see Paul's paintings.](#)

Do you see the distorted angles and rough shapes in his paintings? These may be seen as (almost) the **beginning of Cubism** even though Paul painted his still lifes long before Pablo Picasso. In fact, Pablo considered him his inspiration and a ‘father to us all.’ He admired his work, as did a lot of other painters we have talked about, like Henri Matisse.

Paul became very famous but it took a long time. The world was not ready for his new way of painting for a very long time. **It was not until he was 66 years old that people finally appreciated all that he had done** for the art world of the 19th century. A once unknown artist who painted apples became a **‘father of the modern art.’**

Watch a time-lapse video of an apple being drawn.

His apple-filled still lifes were filled with strong, thick brushstrokes and a playful composition.



COMPOSITION *of an apple*



In the visual arts, composition is the placement of objects in a painting. It means: putting together. There are many ways you can play around with composition and many rules you can follow or break. But let's look at the basics right now.

In most paintings, some things appear to be in front of the others. You can see a person in front of their house, a tree that is closer to you than the mountains behind it, or in this case, the apple is closer than the basket of the apples by the wall.

- Things that are closest to us are in the foreground.
- The ones that are far away are in the background.
- The ones in the middle are in the middle ground.

How do you paint it?

That's what we will explore. Here are some examples to get you started:

Green in the foreground.
Red in the background.



Red in the foreground.
Green in the background.



Red in the foreground.
Green in the foreground..



Green in the foreground.
Red in the background.



Green in the foreground.
Red in the foreground.



back fore **GROUND**

what do you need?

- squashes, apples and pumpkins
- black paper
- soft (chalk) pastels
- hair spray

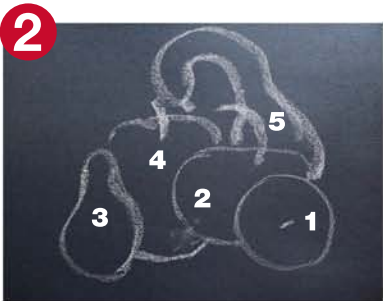
1 Find apples, pumpkins or squashes you want to paint. You can add as many as you want. Paul Cézanne painted anything from one to thirty apples. But 2-5 is probably the best number for you.

Once you find them, **arrange them on the table**. Which ones are you going to put in the foreground (close to you) and which ones will look good in the background? Play around with it.



where
is it?

Jip You can put them on the side, lie them down or tip them a little bit. If they keep falling, just add some poster putty or playdough to keep them in place.



2 Sketch the still life that you see in front of you. Start with the object that is closest to you and go from there. Which one is the first, second, third...? If you want to draw the whole overlapping food, that is fine. Do it. We will color over it later.



3 Add a horizon line (where your table ends and your backdrop begins).

Then choose the most dominant color for each and color it. The left gourd is white and yellow and green—but in this step, we will use only one color: light yellow.



4 Add some details: more colors, patterns, shapes. You should not see any white lines (aside from the horizon).



5 Color the background. Choose two colors and use one for the table and one for the wall. You can place your pastel on its side and use it to shade. If you do, make sure you do not smudge your picture too much, be careful.



You can be bold and create a dramatic look using baskets, crates, sacks and more.

6 Add last details and shadows. If you smeared some pastel over your painting, fix it. Then **spray the hairspray over it so that it does not smear anymore.**

Your still life is done.



Find 5
differences



Paul was very careful about putting his still lives together. He could notice the smallest difference between them. Can you?
Find five differences between these two images. Click on the image below to find the answer.



shine some **LIGHT** on



One of the reasons Paul painted apples again and again was that they let him focus on things he really cared about: **shapes, colors and light.**

[Click here to see how Paul used light and shadows in his art.](#)

Did you know?

What light you use is almost as important as what things you put in your still life. Light can change the mood of your art a great deal. It is not only about day and night.

The right lighting can make your picture look cheerful and happy or spooky and mysterious.

Grab a flashlight and try it out!

How can you light your apple so that it looks different?



Point your flashlight from:



the right side



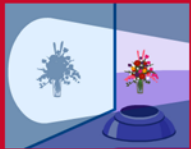
up front



the left side



above



Do you want to experiment with light and shadow right on your computer screen?

[Click here](#) to play a light and shadow game.

Can you make the shadows bigger and more interesting? How do they look inside and outside?

Explore, learn and have fun!



close up



further away

LIGHT, OIL + an APPLE

what do you need?

- apple
- flashlight
- oil pastels
- watercolor paper
- baby oil (or olive oil)
- q-tips and a small cup
- large brush and watercolors

Where
is the highlight?

Use the flashlight to move your highlight all over the apple. How does it change? Where do you like it the best?

Tip

Use white oil pastel where you see the 'highlight'.

Use some brown or little bit of black for the 'shadow' part of an apple.



1 Find an apple you want to draw. Point a flashlight at it, like you learned about on the previous page.

Do you see how the light changes the color? Do you see the highlight and the shadows?



2 Sketch the apple with an oil pastel.



3 Color it in. It does not have to be perfect. In fact, **it should not be perfect.** Just use all the colors you see in the apple and leave small gaps between them.



4 Pour a little bit of oil in a small cup. Dip a q-tip in and use it to blend the colors. The oil will make the pastels blend in a really easy and fun way. When it gets dirty, put it away (on a paper napkin so that it does not stain any furniture). Keep going until your apple looks the way you want it to.

Leave only the wall.

Use a large brush to wet the background wall (only with water). When it is all wet, use watercolors to cover it. The wet-on-wet technique creates an interesting, natural, old-fashioned texture that goes well with your apple still life.



PUMPKIN

what do you need?

- pumpkin (and a flashlight)
- oil pastels, q-tip and oil in a small cup
- watercolor paper
- watercolors, brush and a napkin

1



Choose a pumpkin that you want to paint.

You can use a flashlight to add some highlights and shadows to your still life, if you wish.

2



Sketch the basic shape of the pumpkin.

3



Color it (imperfectly) with the oil pastels.

Do not worry about the details, you will blend the pastels with oil. Focus on using all colors that you see: orange, white, yellow, brown. You can exaggerate them as well.

4



When you are ready, blend the colors with a q-tip dipped in oil.

Take your time and discard the q-tip as soon as it is too dirty.

5



Add a horizon: a line that shows you where the table ends and the wall begins.

6



Now color the table and the wall with watercolors. Use one color for the table and the other one for the background wall.

7



Crumble a paper towel or a napkin. Dip it in the watercolor and lightly press it down on your painting. Why? It creates an interesting texture on your wall.

COLOURFUL *still life*

what do you need?

- fruit on a plate
- oil pastels
 - optional: oil, q-tip and a small cup
- watercolor paper
- watercolors and a large brush



Gobble up some fun!

You can arrange fruit on your plate in a funny way too.

Let's make a turkey, peacock or a fish!

1



Draw the fruit as you see it on your table. Which one is up front? What about the light? Blend the oil pastels together with oil or with your fingers. Use very bold and bright colors.

2



Add some details: a plate, horizon line and details on the fruit.

Now wet the whole paper with water. Then use watercolors to add fun background colors and textures.

The wet-on-wet effect will make the colors blend nicely together. Just make sure to clean your brush thoroughly when changing colors.

Tip

You can use warm colors for one part of the background and cold ones for the other one (table, in this case).



TASTE *test*

There are many different kinds of apples.

They are red, yellow, green. They all taste a little bit different. Some are sweet, others tart. Some are more crispy and crunchy than others.

Which one is your favorite?

Next time you go grocery shopping with your parents, buy several apples (one of each is enough) and then do a taste test at home. **Cut the apples and try a little piece of all of them** (along with your parents and siblings). You can work together to fill out this sheet, or you can each **fill out your own and then compare the results.**

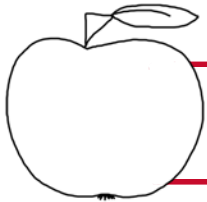
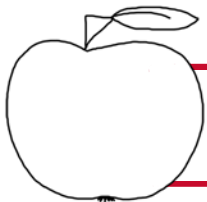
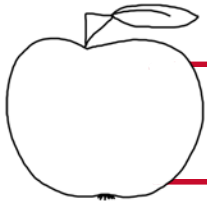
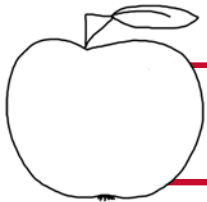
- Do you prefer the same apples?
- Which one is your most and least favorite?
- Why?



NAME
of the apple
(or apple sticker)

What did it taste like? Sweet? Tart? Crunchy?

How much
did you like it?
1 to 5

A large red circle intended for a rating from 1 to 5.A large red circle intended for a rating from 1 to 5.A large red circle intended for a rating from 1 to 5.A large red circle intended for a rating from 1 to 5.

FILM transfer



what do you need?

- wet medium film (we used Duralar)
- markers (not permanent ones)
- watercolor or mixed media paper
- black permanent marker
- paper towel
- water



You have to use a thick, high-quality paper. If you use too much water and a thin paper, the result will be, well, a little disappointing.



1



Draw your still life onto a piece of wet medium film.

2



Wet your watercolor paper a little bit. Do not overwater it, otherwise the picture will be too blurry. When you feel it is ready, **place the foil with your picture onto the wet piece of paper** (marker-side down).

3



Count to ten. Then you can slightly **touch the foil and press it down** – very lightly. When it looks like the picture is transferred, carefully lift up the film.

4



Transfer completed!

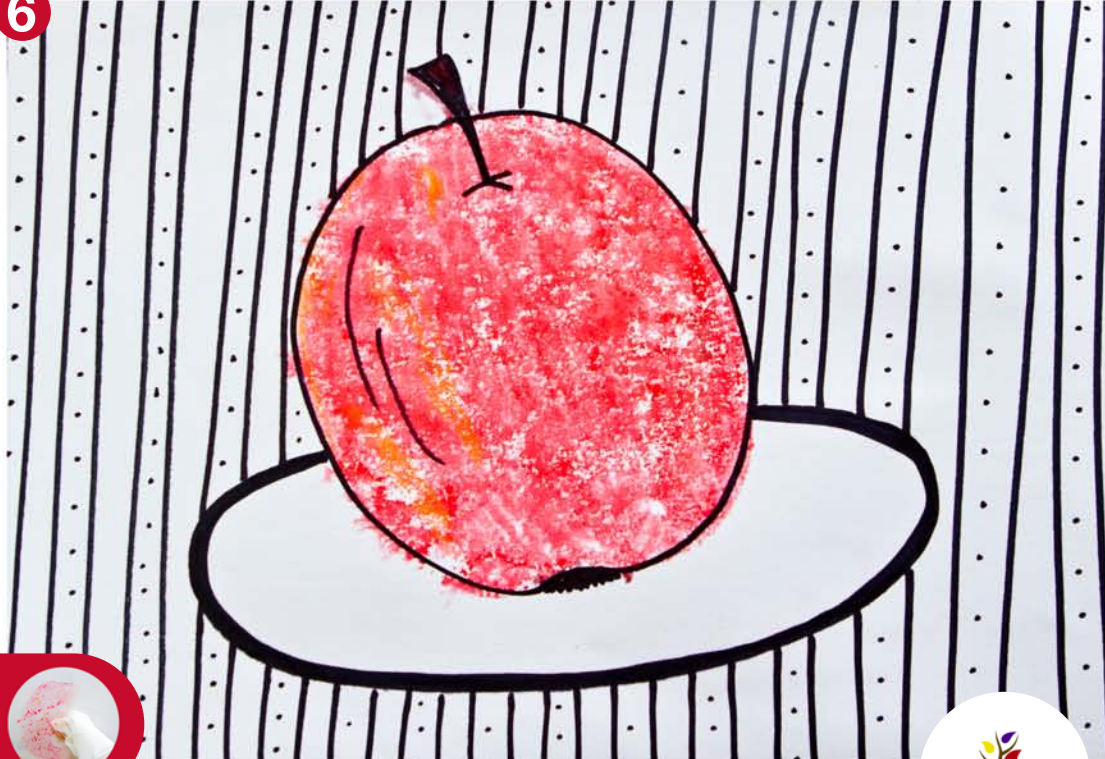
5



Now use a permanent marker to **add details and contours** (outlines) to your still life.

When everything is done, **create a fun background with black and white pattern**. Use straight and curly lines, thick and thin ones, dots, swirls and curls.

6



Tip

You can wipe the film with a wet paper towel and use it again and again!



Still life artist

John Nolan

Who is John?



John is a still life artist. He lives in Dublin, Ireland.

He uses bright colors and bold outlines to bring his still lifes to life. He celebrates color and form, and pays homage to many famous artists along the way.

Where does John find his inspiration?

He finds his inspiration all around him, especially in nature. He loves flowers with their bright colors and tries to capture them in his work.



Why does John paint the way he does?

“ I simplify my paintings by using my bold colours and bold dark outlines, I like to celebrate colour. The dark lines make the colours more vivid, brighter. For example in my painting ‘Still Life With Henri Matisse’ I used my dark lines to paint a bold outline of his face and also included Cypress branches which Matisse loved to paint as well. The oranges in the bowl are in many of his paintings. Everything in the painting is outlined. Then I use my favourite bold colours to make it come alive, like switching on a light. The red and light red stripes in the background are colours that Matisse used in his paintings. He also liked to use bright, bold, vibrant colours. I like to make all the colours pop and contrast with each other. ”

John Nolan

Click here to see more of John's paintings.



How does John create his art?

He always starts a new painting directly on the canvas. Unlike Paul Cézanne, John relies on his imagination and feelings when he works. He builds his still lifes in his mind. He uses his memories and experience to create the images he wants to paint. Sometimes he works on 2 or 3 paintings at the same time. They usually take him two to three weeks to complete, if everything is going well. And if it doesn't-it is ok as well. As John says, we learn more from our mistakes than from doing everything perfectly the first time.





John loves Still life paintings. He enjoys adding references to famous artists into his still life compositions as a mark of respect to their greatness. It is called 'paying homage.'

Can you guess which artists (or painting) John is paying homage to?
Click on the images to see if you were right.



WHO
is that
?

OUTLINES *of a still life*

what do you need?

- watercolor paper
- pencil
- black oil pastel
- tempera paints
- brush



What is an outline?

It is a line that shows you where one object ends and another one begins. It marks the boundaries of each object, like you can see in John's paintings.

1



Create your still life that you want to paint.

Add some fun element into it. You can add your favorite toy, book, snack or anything else that you would like. It can be a still life dedicated to your parents, your friend or to your favorite holiday (we made a Halloween one with a creepy crawly spider).

2



Sketch out the still life with a pencil.

Keep in mind that some objects are in the foreground and some are in the background.

What can you add to your still life?



John painted things Andy Warhol liked (and is famous for): flowers, tomato soup, portraits and soap.

What do you like?

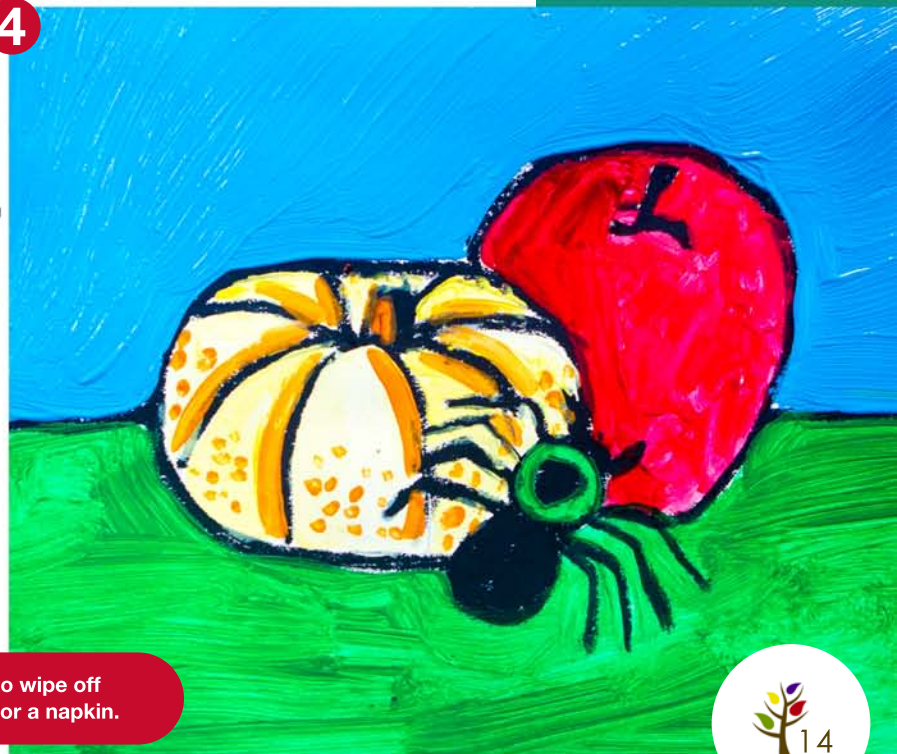
3



When you are happy with your drawing, **trace the outlines with an oil pastel**. Remember to push hard and hold it low so that it does not break.

Use bold colors to paint your picture. Do not focus on the light in this painting. Use bold primary (red, yellow, blue) and secondary (orange, purple, green) colors with a lot of contrast.

4



Jip

If you paint over the outline, it is easy to wipe off the paint with your finger, clean brush or a napkin.

Want to learn **MORE?**



See Paul Cézanne's art



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We will share the pictures online in our gallery!

Also you can

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Send us your pictures at art@arTreeKids.com by October 30th, 2014.



December: Arno and Traditions

- Learn how people celebrate holidays around the world
- Explore lines with Enrico Arno
- Capture your family winter traditions
- Bend, swirl and curl lines to create your art
- Explore wire art with Federico Uribe
- Create snowflakes and decorate ornaments
- Find lines in Kwanzaa, Hanukkah and Christmas



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